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ABSTRACT

This bibliographic essay describes and discusses important books in a variety of thematic areas associated with the New Age Movement, which is a distinctive communicative phenomenon characterized by unconventional beliefs and activities. The essay argues that the single subject pervading the peculiar phenomena and puzzling thoughtful critics is the mind, its enormous potential and unknown parameters. The essay's introduction describes the new age movement and its development, discussing several related books. The individual thematic sections of the bibliography, each of which discusses a number of texts in some detail, include: (1) Mythology; (2) The "Spiritualization" of Knowledge; (3) Heightened Sensory Perception; (4) New Insights in Health and Medicine; (5) Spiritual "Ecology"; (6) The Shaman and Shamanic Experience; (7) The "Vision Quest"; (8) Astral Projection; (9) Crystals; (10) Reincarnation; (11) Channeling; (12) Unidentified Flying Objects; (13) The Men's Movement; (14) The "New" Religions; and (15) an Epilogue, in which some contemporary magazines offering sophisticated treatment of these and other issues associated with the New Age Movement are addressed. (HB)

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THE "NEW" AGE
A Bibliographic Essay

Daniel Ross Chandler

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THE "NEW" AGE
A Bibliographic Essay

"New" age believers are ardent adherents. The "new age" movement is a distinctive communicative phenomena characterized by unconventional beliefs. This colorful cadre attracts inventive tinkerers investing long hours in their basements constructing amazing gadgets, star-struck contactees conversing with entities inhabiting inner or outer space, and reincarnationists remembering their former lives. More than an avant-garde attracting "outsiders" and "outcasts," the emerging movements enlists practical visionaries exploring unknown depths in the human psyche, spiritual philosophers discerning fresh meanings in historical religions, healing professionals bridging the casm separating "mind" and "spirit," quantum physicists and physical scientists studying striking similarities in religion and science, and imaginative innovators teaching practical skills for enjoying human existence. Stories reporting "flying saucers," describing astral travel and projection, and confirming "inner earth" civilizations evoke a strange surreality and arcane aesthetic. Employing the sophisticated methodologies that characterize the experimental sciences, "new age" embrace these unconventional phenomena with sincere sympathy and unending curiousity, resembling anthropologists and archeologists who dispense the compliment of understanding rather than the insult of a cure. These believers are enacting an unusually timely myth and delving deeply into subterranean strata of an emerging social order. During a generation dominated with science, engineering, and technology, these beliefs incessently spawn, inevitably fuse, and eventually multiply. These extravagant enthusiasms enunciated by "new age" believers challenge the earthbound pronouncements expressed by hard-nosed scoffers and unconvinced skeptics. The richly textured tapestry

woven with carefully crafted stories constitutes a highly entertaining but half-hidden art-form that gains attention through the entertainment-oriented mass media. A single subject pervading the peculiar phenomena and puzzling thoughtful critics is the mind, its enormous potential and unknown paramaters.

The Harmonic Convergence symbolizes the "new age" movement. In the late sixties, about four hundred "hippies" gathered on a mountain near Boulder, Colorado, expectantly awaiting the imminent collision of the astroid Icarus. These "hippies" were convinced that an approaching apocalypse wound ensue from a crashing asteroid smashing human history. By the eighties, beliefs embraced by earlier enthusiasts became assimilated into an emerging "new age" movement in which adherents affirmed that "thought-forms determine the world" and that "humans create their reality." Thousands celebrated the Harmonic Convergence that happened on August 16-17, 1987. Based upon a cyclical concept of time as calculated with the Mayal calendar, the Harmonic Convergence signalled the commencement of the concluding cycle of the Mayan ages and prompted pilgrimages to scattered sacred sites. The imaginative individual who inspired the historic happening was Jose Arguelles, a Boulder artist-historian who published his vision-imparted calculation in his popular book, The Mayan Factor (Sante Fe: Bear, 1987). Regarded widely as the book that created the Harmonic Convergence, Arguelles' The Mayan Factor contains abundant "new age" lore: ancient astronauts, the face apparently appearing on Mars, flying saucers, geomancy, morphogenetic fields, prophecy, planetary transformation, pyramid power, crystals, ancient Egyptians, and early Mayans. Although Arguelles explained the Mayan background of the Harmonic Convergence, Jim Berenholtz, a New Yorker studying native American prophecies, discovered the importance of the August date before hearing Arguelles' calculations when he observed that the

Harmonic Convergence coincised with Lord Krishna's birthday and that August 17 marked the rising of Sirius as the morning star.

The Harmonic Convergence assumed movement proportions that attracted people across the entire planet. At the center of "new age" phenomena are the essential elements of a new religion: a supernatural revelation disclosing inspired knowledge, a prophet who expresses the knowledge, a book in which the revelation is reported, and a growing community harkening to the prophet's pronouncement. Arguelles stated that he experienced a sudden vision while driving along Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles; he envisioned an "Earth Surrender" ritual transpiring around the world in The Mayan Factor; and countless believers undertook pilgrimages to sacred sites and celebrated the event with meditation, chanting, and hugging. Arguelles described the "new age" entered after August 16-17, 1987, as a reversal of the "resonant field paradigm" that commenced in 1618. And the prophet predicted that by 1992 resistance against collapsing mental constructs will cease, that humanity will enter a twenty-year period that ends the concluding twenty years in the complete Mayan Great Cycle, and that by 2102 AD humanity will witness the flowering of the species by shifting evolutionary patterns and communicating with "the galactic federation." Berenholtz believed that during the eventful Harmonic Convergence humanity achieved a critical threshold, succeeded with an imperative implantation, and accomplished a seeding that planted fresh genetic information.

Throughout human history people holding curious beliefs conclude periodically that there are times when certain signs indicate a coming apocalypse that announces a promising "new age." Charles Mackay's classic that was first published in 1841, Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds (Avenel: Crown, 1980)

provides interesting histories describing popular trends including alchemy and witch hunts that were followed by get-rich schemes and magnetic healing. Daniel Cohen's Waiting for the Apocalypse (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1983) gives histories of doomsday beliefs such as Norse mythology, medieval astrologers, the nineteenth-century Millerites, contemporary catastrophic scenarios, visions indicating end-time, extinction through meteoric and cometary collisions, nuclear warfare, and the death of the sun.

James R. Lewis and J. Gordon Melton's Perspectives on the New Age (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) commences with a comprehensive historical survey, continues with analyses probing different segments within the movement, and concludes with descriptions suggesting the international impact. This excellent study starts from a well defined historical perspective, includes several studies written from different viewpoints, and anticipates future directions and developments. Lewis and Melton's book provides an appropriate introduction to an unconventional phenomenon that several scholars regard as the most significant development in contemporary western religion. Editor Robert Basil's commendable anthology, Not Necessarily the New Age (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1988), contains helpful essays surveying the historical movement and includes critical accounts probing reincarnation, clairvoyance, trance-channeling, and transpersonal psychology. The "new age" was inaugurated with Marilyn Ferguson's The Aquarian Conspiracy (New York: St. Martin's, 198Ø), in which the author introduced the readers to a flourishing counterculture in which countless Americans envision the universe as a living organism rather than a lifeless mechanism, consider body/mind as an unbroken continuum or connection, and the indivisable oneness of humanity. James Webb's The Occult Underground (Peru: Open Court, 1974) and his The Occult Establishment (Peru: Open Court, 1976)

traces the historical development. The Occult Underground suggests how this nineteenth-century cultural explosion developed as a response against the rationalistic paradigm provided by the Enlightenment; resulted in the 1893 World Parliament of Religions that convened in Chicago amid the Columbian Exposition, and became expressed through Theosophy, Mormonism, and Christian Science. Webb's The Occult Establishment details a continuous development, emphasizing the Theosophists, Anthroposophists, health cults, the psychedelic movement, and the western fascination by eastern spirituality.

Mythology

Some "new age" adherents seem preoccupied with Joseph Campbell's odyssey through the world of mythology and casts penetraiting insight into people's spiritual center. Campbell synthesized wisdom gleaned from different traditions when he discussed the hero within, the vision quest, death/rebirth, the Christ figure, and eastern and western spiritual traditions. From his childhood visits to Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and youthful musings in the American Museum of Natural History, to his perceptive explorations in the Arthurian legend, Jung's psychology, eastern philosophy, and the Judeo-Christian tradition, Campbell discerned a wealth of wisdom that rejuvenated the study of myth. A helpful biography is Stephen and Robin Larsen's A Fire in the Mind: The Life of Joseph Campbell (Garden City: Doubleday, 1992), in which the writers describe how Campbell digested "medieval mythic stew, containing fragments of the Dionysian mystery traditions, shamanic lore, the Goddess religion, Celtic magic, and Christian mysteries." Among Campbell's formidable publications are The Mythic Image [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 199Ø] and with Bill Moyers, The Power of Myth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1991).

The "spiritualization" of knowledge

Some "new age" enthusiasts seek parallels between mystical experience and contemporary science, not simply by philosophically integrating these seemingly different perspectives but by comparing their conclusions. These "new age" ahderents appreciate an ancient wisdom discovered in religious traditions, decline to separate knowledge into exclusive categories, and resolve apparent contradictions in a unifying vision. Fritjof Capra's The Tao of Physics (Boulder: Shambhala, 1983) analyzed the similarities between modern physics and eastern mysticism by comparing modern scientific theories with Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, Taoist, and Zen mysticism. Gary Zukav's The Dancing Wu Li Masters (New York: Morrow, 1979) discusses technical scientific knowledge such as quantum theory and realitivity; however Zukav detects striking commonalities among modern physics and eastern religions. The current situation that stimulates this speculation is described in editor Stanislav Grof's Ancient Wisdom and Modern Thought (Albany: State University of New York, 1984). Contributors indicate that recent scientific discoveries reveal the limitations of the Newtonian-Cartesian model of the universe, suggests an increasing convergence of scientific knowledge and the "perennial philosophy," and that thoughtful inquirers require an intelligent reevaluation of ancient spiritual systems that formerly were rejected when they appeared inconsistent with a scientific worldview. A crack in the cosmic egg -- a new epistemic orientation -- evokes different concepts of "reality" that fascinate sincere seekers. In The Turning Point (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992) Capra extends his explanations through innovative thought that bridges science and spirit.

Hightened sensory perception

Employing electrical stimulation of the brain elicits mental states that

replace tiresome memorization and aesthetic contemplation with genius-level intelligence and blissful nirvana. From pre-historic experiments conducted with psychotropic mushrooms to Freud's probing the unconscious, human efforts to control the mind and thought seem timeless. "New age" aspirants are intent with blending two forces, the transcendentalism that developed during the sixties and the technology that characterizes the twentieth century; hence they concoct a conglomeration of psychojargon with innovative theories of neuroscience. Some contend that using technology induces the nirvanic, trace-like state that yogic labor for decades to develop. An inventor of "brain building equipment" traveled to Zanzibar where he practiced medicine without a license, to Bulgaria where he studied accelerated-learning techniques, and to Egypt where he treated brain-damaged soldiers using bells from Tibet. A result is a ceptical generation embracing "holistic health" and practicing self-healing, combining eastern spirituality with Silicon Valley micro-chips, sitting in beach chairs with their eyes encased in stroboscopic welder's goggles, their ears entombed in metal headphones, and their faces reflecting an abstracted other-worldliness. Some pursuing "sensory engineering" profess that "brain building practices" engender deep relaxation, prompts creativity, sharpens the memory, mitigates addiction, increases intelligence, possibly grows brain cells, and strengthens problem-solving and decision-making capacities. Through a process called "cranial electro-therapy stimulation" and employing equipment that produces "transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulus," these "new age" believers reduce nirvana to an apparent science. In Megabrain (Westminster: Ballantine/Random House, 1986), Omni magazine reporter Michael Hutchison discusses his ventures into this psychological predisposition described as "alert relaxation."

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New insights in health and medicine

"New age" believers ponder how culturally conditioned minds thwart creative thinking by imposing patterns that determine the perception of reality. Criticizing conventional concepts of time and space as allusory, some state that scientific models and theories are a fallacious, destructive myth. Examining the known and fathoming a different reality, some seekers encourage persons to transcend a meaningless existence by experiencing every second as eternity.

Several world-renowned scientists and psychiatrists indicate that people are unbounded in time and space and that persons are omnipresent, infinite, and immortal. In Recovering the Soul: A Scientific and Spiritual Search (New York: Bantam, 1989), Larry Dossey describes the nonlocal nature of the mind, discusses the relevance of nonlocal mind upon health, presents current research illustrating the power exerted by prayer in healing, and considers the possible future direction of medicine. In Love, Medicine, and Miracles (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), acclaimed pediatrician-surgeon Bernie Siegal explains the inner resources supporting wellness through self-healing and emphasizes how medical practice is predicated upon fundamental spiritual foundations. Deepak Chopra's Unconditional Life: Mastering the Forces that Shape Personal Reality (New York: Bantam, 1991) ponders the infinite potential inherent within the conscious, intelligent universe; advances fresh, exciting possibilities for maintaining complete health by appreciating the influence of the mind upon the body; and appropriates deeper meaning to terms such as fear, medicine, and enlightenment. Employing his medical training and knowledge of quantum physics, Chopra incorporates the ancient healing science of Ayurveda, which indicates that freedom from illness necessitates controlling one's awareness, bringing awareness into balance, and projecting that balance through the body.

Spiritual "ecology"

Matthew Fox, a Dominican priest who was ordained in 1967, studied history, theology, and spirituality with liberation theologian M.D. Chenu at the famed Institut Catholique in Paris. Subsequently silenced by the Vatican for his unorthodox statements on feminism, sexuality, and the priesthood, Father Fox encourages returning to Christianity's mystical sources and reclaiming spirituality from suppression by the church. Fox has written nearly a dozen controversial books, edits his magazine Creation, and serves as founder-director of the Institute of Culture and Creation Spirituality at Holy Name College, Oakland.

Fox employs the term, "Cosmic Christ Archetype," to designate a universal experience, seeing splendor and divine grace pervading the world. The priest describes every creature as a mirror reflecting divinity, illumined with the light of Christ. The Cosmic Christ is the divine radiance glowing in every galaxy, blade of grass, and child's smile. The Cosmic Christ Archetype is unique to neither the Christian nor the Jewish tradition, but appears in Eastern spirituality with the contemplation of "the Buddha nature." Working with several distinguished physicists attempting to relate scientific knowledge and mystical experience, Fox accepts the discovery in quantum theory suggesting that the universe is expanding; and the priest contends that the Cosmic Christ Archetype must be enlarged. Although most persons consider time and space as eternal in their present form, recently some thinkers commenced considering time as evolving and space as continuously created. From this observation Fox argues that the Cosmic Christ Archetype should expand. The priest criticizes religious fundamentalism as thoughtless rigidity against this required development. The mysticism that he represents as the Cosmic Christ experience is a spiritual consciousness that transcends the ordinary time/space

relations and limitations. Rather than advocating a "stewardship theology" based upon social responsibility and guilt feelings, Fox proposes an ethic predicated upon pleasure and delight; and he envisions the earth as a garden radiating with a divine presence. Profoundly moving is the priest's powerful claim that when the earth's ecology becomes endangered, the earth resembles a crucified Christ.

Father Fox produced a primer explaining "creation spirituality" when he published Original Blessing (Santa Fe: Bear, 1983). Contending that the mystical tendencies and artistic impulses within humans are inhibited by religious institutions, he discerns within people a spiritual center that prompts humans to celebrate the creativity that characterizes living. Fox teaches that unconditional love and creativity comprise the propelling force throughout the universe and that openness to mystical experience and sacred reverence provides liberation from humanity's addictive, destructive behavior. The Coming of the Cosmic Christ (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988) envisions healing Mother Earth and an emerging global renaissance. In A Spirituality Named Compassion (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), Fox develops a spirituality of compassion that promotes personal, social, and global healing. Spirituality of compassion stems from an awareness of the interconnectedness of all persons and creatures. Creation Spirituality (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991) passionately encourages saving the planet's ecology, champions the ancient tradition of creation spirituality that blends Christian mysticism with contemporary social struggles, describes awe as a mystical response to creation and the initial step toward transfiguration, and envisions a fresh beginning through which people learn to honor the earth and persons. Fox's efforts to root "creation spirituality" in traditional Catholic Sources is indicated in Sheer Joy: The Creation Spirituality of Thomas Aquinas (San Francisco: Harper-

San Francisco, 1992). Matthew Fox's The Cosmic Christ Archetype is available on two audio cassetts from Sounds True, 735 Walnut Street, Boulder, Colorado 80302.

Spititual "ecology" is discussed in James Lovelock's The Ages of Gaia (New York: Norton, 1988) and Stanislav Grof's The Adventure of Self Discovery (Ithaca: CUP Services, 1988). Lovelock elaborates the Gaia hypothesis, the theory that the earth is a living organism with all living forms interconnected. Psychiatrist Grof reports an emerging category of experience, the powerful perception of the earth as a living organism, wounded and crying to be healed.

The shaman and shamanic experience

Numerous "new age" enthusiasts are fascinated with shamans and shamanic experience described in Mircea Eliade's classic, Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy (New York: Pantheon, 1964). With sophisticated scholarship that distinguishes Eliade's pioneering research as a definitive study, this University of Chicago professor restored to respect the "shamanic model of spiritual experience." Secondary sources sustaining this interest include Joan Halifax's Shaman: The Wounded Healer (London: Thames and Hudson, c1982) and editor Gary Door's anthology Shaman's Path (Boston: Shambhala, 1988). From a growing literature comes a picture of a shaman as a "lone wolf of the supernatural" and a "supernatural practitioner" who serves his community but functions primarily as an individual. A shaman's power comes from his special relationship with a supernatural source. Shamanism is a mystical experience that characterizes primitive religion, and the excursion of a shaman during his initiation or ritual sacrifice is described as "the most ancient expression of mystical experience known to humanity." Serving as a "medicine man" or "witch doctor" for a community, a shaman enters a enters a trance, contacts supernatural worlds, obtains and discloses a treatment

prescribed as a cure, usually charges a fee for performing his special service, and sometimes escorts the soul of the deceased to the other world. Often seen as psychologically unstable and adept at entering trances, a shaman might be considered as a person who died and returned to life or entered a deep coma and returned.

Shamanism receives most complete expression in Arctic and Central Asian societies, although the phenomena appears among cultures in Southeast Asia, Oceania, and North America. In hunting and gathering societies, a shaman is usually the exclusive supernatural practitioner who performs sacrificial rituals, conducts hunting magic, attempts to control the weather, confronts ghosts, and foresees the future. In tribes and communities where other persons perform supernatural feats, a shaman's functions become restricted and specialized. Some are experts dealing with definite maladies. In Siberia and Northeastern Asia, a person becomes a shaman through the hereditary transmission of the profession or by election; rarely does a person become a shaman by a personal decision or through a request from a group. In North America, the voluntary "vision quest" constitutes the principal method of selection; a shaman is recognized after completing a series of initiatory trials and receiving instructions imparted by qualified mentors. As the guardian who protects a community's traditional lore, a shaman serves as the storyteller who narrates his adventurous ascents heavenward and his descents into the netherworld.

Translating an academic appreciation of ancient phenomena into popular subject generating an increasing interest was accomplished by Carlos Castaneda, a graduate during the sixties who pursued anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Commercing by analyzing hallucinogenic plants, Castaneda

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eventually explained that through encounters with Yaqui Indian sorcerer "don Juan" he inherited a magical tradition stretching through five centuries from pre-conquest Mexico. Writing his doctoral dissertation, Castaneda eithercreated or revived a distinctive literary genre, "magical autobiography." Although the student presented himself simply as a sincere seeker pondering esoteric wisdom, he was acknowledged as a spiritual adept when his dissertation was published as an enormously popular book, The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968). In rapid succession Simon and Schuster published Castaneda's other books: A Separate Reality in 1971, Journey to Ixtlan in 1972, Tales of Power in 1974, The Second Ring of Power in 1977, The Eagle's Gift in 1981, The Fire from Within in 1984, and The Power of Silence in 1987. Audio cassetts of The Teachings of Don Juan and A Separate Reality are available from Audio Literature, Box 7123, Berkeley, California 94707.

Suspicion that Castaneda was simply a creative novelist grew when Richard de Mille published Castaneda's Journey (Santa Barbara: Capra, 1978) and an anthology, The Don Juan Papers (Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson, 1980). The argument presented by de Mille is that Castaneda's books contain details about time, location, sequence, and events that are inconsistent or contradictory. The critic claims that the information contained in Castaneda's writings comes from sources that de Mille discovered.

Almost forgotten during the ensuing controversy was the claim that the sources supporting Castaneda's novels in no way discredits the profundity of the shaman's experience as presented in Eliade's Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy or as demonstrated directly in a shaman's experience.

The "vision quest"

Among the persistent interests pursued by "new age" believers is the ancient "vision quest." Within the American Plains Indians, the "vision quest" is regarded as an essential stage in a young man's development. "Vision quests" are powerful experiences during which visions arise as a method for securing the guidance of a guardian spirit; through the imparted instruction, a young man learns to use medicine correctly, the design that should be painted on his shield and tipi, and his name as an adult. During this profound experience, a young man ventures alone into some sacred environs, seldon eats or drinks, prays, offers smoke to the spirits, and sometimes waits several days. A vision comes during a dream or appears as a sign after the youth awakens. During the "vision quest," the young man acquires his spirit, such as a bird, horse, or buffalo. When a vision does not develop, an aspirant might resort to extreme measures, such as lacerating his flesh, cutting off a finger, or refusing drinking water. Among the specialized studies describing the "vision quest" are Kathleen Margaret Dugan's The Vision Quest of the Plains Indians (Lewiston: Mellen, 1985) and Steven Foster, The Book of the Vision Quest (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1987).

Astral projection

"Astral projection" designates an experience reported by people who discover themselves "outside of their bodies." In his classic study describing shamanism, Eliade discussed how the Siberian and North American shamans prepared for their "flights," suggesting specifically how the Yenisei Ostjak shamans commenced by fasting and performing rituals. In Beyond the Body: An Investigation of Out-of-the Body Experiences (Chicago: Academy Press, 1989), Susan J. Blackmore described

her two-hour occurrence during her freshman year at Oxford University when her "split body" soared above housetops, across continents, and through the universe. Blackmore's Beyond the Body represents ten years of her research, during which she gathered anecdotal evidence, cross-cultural data, and case studies.

Crystals

Some "new age" believers claim that crystals heal, strengthen extra-sensory perception, purify water, improve the taste of wine, increase gas mileage, energize people and machines, contro the earth's electromagnetic field, enhance channeling, and facilitate astral projection. Although scholars question whether the practice was pervasive, thousands of years ago some shamans employed crystals during healing ceremonies. Modern shamans inhabiting Australia, Siberia, Africa, and North and South America utilize crystals; and this enduring practice illustrates the belief that "crystal power" constitutes "an ancient esoteric art" and provides "bridges to heaven." Some shamans regard crystals as "healing rocks" thrown from the firmament by gods, creating a connection between the human and spirit worlds. Legends and folklore suggests that wizzards and magicians used crystals on their wands and that the jewels adorning the crowns of royalty increased their "cosmic energy."

Extensive employment of these clear and colorless "shreds of frozen light" enhances "guided meditation," when people supposedly enter bodily these special stones when contemplating their beauty. George Frederick Kunz, an internationally recognized expert in precious gems, presents an excellent historical survey in The Curious Lore of Precious Stones (Mineola: Dover, 1971). Kunz's study gives "a description of their sentiments and folk lore, superstitions, symbolism, mysticism, use in medicine, projection, prevention, religion, and divination. Crystal gazing, birthstones, lucky stones and talismans, astral, zodiacal, and planetary."

Reincarnation

Speculation about reincarnation (affirming that a human personality assumes another body after death) and past-life regression (the practice during which a person under hypnosis remembers earlier lives) grew when Morey Bernstein published his popular The Search for Bridey Murphy (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956). Bernstein described hypnotizing Colorado housewife Virginia Tighe, who recalled her past-life experiences as an Irish woman who died in 1864. Even earlier, psychologist Theodore Flournoy's From India to the Planet Mars (New York: Harper, 1901) reported his two-year study of Catherine-Elise Smith, whose exceptional trances evoked Calgiostro and Marie Antoinette. Almost every case involving "past-life memory" that serious researchers study scientifically concludes either that the content of the memory can not be verified with historical evidence or that these recollections result from cryptomnesia, thoughts that appear original but are actually earlier but forgotten experiences from this life. Considerable interest in this persistent phenomena was provoked recently by Ian Stevenson, professor and psychiatrist at the University of Virginia. Stevenson spent twenty years studying children claiming to remember their past lives. These cases come predominately from India and the Middle East, where acceptance of reincarnation is widespread; some cases come from practitioners following the Druse religion, who search for the newborn reincarnation of recently deceased relatives. Stevenson's enormously interesting books are Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980) and Stevenson's Children Who Remember Previous Lives (Charlettesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987). Recent studies that deserve thoughtful consideration include Peter Preuss' Reincarnation: An Inquiry into Its Possibility and Significance (Lewiston: Mellen, 1989) and Sylvia S. Cranston and

Carey Williams, Reincarnation: A New Horizon in Science, Religion, and Society (New York: Crown, 1984).

Reincarnation is a characteristic affirmation in Asian religion and philosophy, including Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, which arose in India. The belief appears in primitive religion, some ancient middle eastern religions, Manichaeism, Gnosticism, and theosophy.

Channeling

Channeling is a communicative process in which a person called "a channel" transmitts a message from a supposed disincarnate source described as "an entity" separate from the channel's consciousness. Although channeling is as ancient as religion, recent interest intensified when an Elmira, New York, novelist Jane Roberts disclosed receiving messages from Seth, whom she presented as an "energy personality essence no longer focused in physical reality" who knew numerous existences through countless millenia. And the interest increased in the eighties when Hollywood actress Shirley MacLaine described John, a disembodied entity speaking through Kevin Ryerson. Some "new age" believers are convinced that channeling constitutes an essential element in an emerging "new religion." While enigmatic instances involving channeling, possession, and automatic speaking and writing are ignored, Stanford professor emeritus Ernest Hilgard presents some outstanding research in Divided Consciousness (Somerset: Wiley, 1986). John Klimo's Channeling (New York: St. Martin's, 1987) contains biographies describing mistorical and modern channels, selections from channeled writings, and original interviews. A subsequent study is Klimo's interesting book, Channeling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources (Los Angeles: Tarcher, 1988).

Unidentified flying objects

In 1931, Charles Fort amassed accounts describing strange flying objects and reporting how people were transported through time and space. However Raymond A. Palmer is the individual most responsible for creating a popular mythology and generating growing interest in "flying saucers." In 1938, the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company in Chicago purchased a declining magazine, Amazing Stories, and young Palmer assumed editorial responsibilities. In September, 1946, Amazing Stories carried a short article describing experiments conducted with a circular craft in San Francisco during 1927. Twenty years afterward, Kenneth Arnold inaugurated the current dispensation in flying saucer intrique when he sighted unidentified flying objects. However a report described as factual had described a saucer-like "circle-winged plane" in Palmer's September, 1946, Amazing Stories. Between March, 1945, and June, 1947, millions of Americans saw copies of Amazing Stories. When Kenneth Arnold reported sighting a cluster of flying saucers over Mt. Rainier on June 24, 1947, Palmer was bemusted that the fiction concocted for his magazine had become perceptable reality for millions around the world. In 1957 Palmer launched another newsstand publication, Flying Saucers From Other Worlds. As public interest in flying saucers declined, Palmer kept the subject alive; when a massive wave of curiousity developed between 1964 and 1968, Palmer increased the press run. However Flying Saucers From Other Worlds was discontinued during 1975, and Palmer subsequently died in 1977. Palmer suggested this peculiar phenomena to the American people preceeding the initial sightings in 1947.

Reported sightings raise an inevitable question, asking where flying saucers come from. Some accounts claim the unidentified flying objects emminate from within a hollow earth. In 1818 United States infantry captain John Cleves Symmes stated

his conviction that the earth is a hollow shell containing four additional concentric spheres accessable through polar openings. In 1896 Cyrus Teed wrote about receiving a revelation that the earth is hollow and that humanity resides inside. In 1906 William Reed dismissed Symmes' speculation concerning concentric spheres, but Reed described a single hollow globe with polar openings and a subterranean world within. Reed declared that the Aurora Borealis reflects forest fires and errupting volcanoes blazing in the earth's interior. In 1913 Marshall Gardner wrote that the hollow earth contains a minature sun that causes the auroras, that the Eskimos are descebdents from inner-earth races, and that the mammothd found frozen in Artic ice originate inside the hollow earth. Bruce Walton's A Guide to the Inner Earth (Jane Lew: New Age Books, c1983) is an extensive annotated bibliography, and Walton's Mount Shasta: Home of the Ancients (Mokelumne Hill: Mokelumne Hill, 1985) is an anthology compaing complete reprints of twenty-five rare articles.

Fascination about flying saucers grows with periodic sensational reports that these unidentified objects have crashed and that these significant happenings become enshrowded with government-imposed secrecy. David Michael Jacobs' The UFO Controversy in America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975) is probably the most comprehensive and fair-minded history of unidentified flying objects, and this commendable book contains an interesting section describing the "mysterious airship" movement that developed between 1896 and 1897. Generally accepted as the finest bibliography about unidentified flying objects, the two volumes that comprise George M. Eberhart's UFOs and the Extraterrestrial Contact Movement (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1986) presents the phenomena as an evolving space age religion.

Conviction about flying saucers is strengthen with current reports stating that numerous unsuspecting individuals were abducted by space aliens and subjected to medical experiments. In 1964 Boston psychiatrist Benjamin Simon hypnotized New Hampshire couple Barney and Betty Hill, who suffered from anxiety attacks attributed to encounters with extraterrestrials. John G. Fuller's The Interrupted Journey (New York: Dell, 1987) tells how visitors from space abducted the Hills, subjected the couple to frightening experiments, and induced an amesia concealing the terrifying experience. In the mid 197Øs, Budd Hopkins, a New York artist, hyonotized people and discovered additional cases of abduction, surgical invasion, and induced amnesia that he relates in Missing Time (New York: Ballantine, 1981). Response from readers of Missing Time are published in Hopkins' Intruders (New York: Ballantine, 1987). With Hopkins' assistance, Whitley Strieber described his similar encounter in Communion (Dresden: Avon, 1987). However Philip J. Klass' UFO Abductions (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1988) is a caustic criticism challenging Hopkins' methodology and citing the inconsistencies in the stories.

The men's movement

The men's movements attempts to examine the unexplored depths in the male psyche and develope a contemporary psychological understanding of the masculine by analyzing the archetypes of man as king, warrior, magician, and lover. One representative group, EarthMen Resources in Chicago, nurtures male psychological development with a seminar series, "Days of Men," that usually combines lectures, discussions, practical techniques, experimental exercises, and ceremonial drumming. A fundamental teaching is that love arises in a sweeping on-rusg of vitality, blood, and passion and continuously expands to encompass the entire universe. Recognizing that love

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entails enormous risk and great vulnerability, men participating in these programs learn that the courage to love is a frightening challenge inevitable confronted in developing mature masculinity. A danger facing many modern men is that they succomb to a "shadow lover," renounce their wholeness and self-direction, and degenerate into violence and self-destruction. On another unwholesome level, a man withdraws into impotence and depression.

The philosophy that sustains the men's movement is expressed in popular books such as Sam Keen's Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man (New York: Bantam, 1992) and Robert Bly's Iron John: A Book About Men (New York: Vintage, 1992). Chicago EarthMen founders Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette wrote a pioneering study, King/Warrior/Magician/Lover (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991," which was succeeded with their The King Within (New York: Morrow, 1992).

Keen's Fire in the Belly complains that modern men experience themselves "blamed, demeaned, and attacked" for uncertain reasons and discover themselves described with extensive negative adjectives ranging from "soft" to "macho." Keen states that men are unconsciously bound not to the women they know through their casual or intimate relationships, but the idea woman, which controls men with mystery, judgment, distant goddess terror, and fascination. Keen repeats Joseph Campbell's conclusion that all tribal rites of passage are composed of three acts: separation, initiation, and reincorporation. However the subtle rites for initiating boys into manhood in western culture are neither clearly defined nor well understood. Keen contends that without their conscious knowledge or consent, men are molded by modern myths about war, work, and sex in which a man must aggressively dominate. Keen concludes convincingly that the "historical challenge for modern men is clear - to discover a peaceful form of virility and to create an ecological commonwealth,

to become fierce gentlemen."

Bly believes that male initiation occurs through the influence and guidance imparted by older men. Eventually a boy must be removed from a mother's tutelage and given guidance from a male figure, who introduces the youth to the Wild Man within the boy. Bly stresses that men must contact the Wild Man inside themselves. However the writer maintains that this process is not happening satisfactorily in this culture and a consequence is an increasingly violent society. Bly attributes this tragedy to an ignorance of initiation and a dismissal of values inherent in initiation.

The "new" religions

Almost persistently and imperceptively until recently, intercultural communication among believers embracing different expressions of world religion has nurtured greater religious pluralism in the United States. Twelve percent of the American people, nearly thirty million individuals, presently seek spiritual development through new scientific, Judeo-Christian, Eastern, and primitive religion. The "new religions" appearing in contemporary America are among the most interesting and important groups within the "new age" movement.

Jacob Needleman's pioneering publication The New Religions (New York: Crossroads, 1987) describes the new religious revolution striking western ecclesiastical establishments as a spiritual renaissance promising to transform everything that modern persons think about God and the human potential. Needleman states that these teachings and influence might compel westerners to undertake the most critical self-examination unprecendented since the Scientific Revelotion. This prominent professor predicts that Tibetan Buddhism will become for contemporary westerners what Zen Buddhism was during a previous decade. Fundamental conceptions concerning "religion" will be challenged powerfully with an inwardness that characterizes

Eastern spirituality. Needleman explains that western religion can be improved by incorporating three characteristics from the emerging spirituality: an understanding of an enormous human potential, the utilization of the techniques of spiritual discipline, and an appreciation of individual intellectual freedom. Emerging eastern spirituality awakens an awareness that abandonment of intellectual inquiry constitutes a central characteristic of western religion; that analytical thought become sterile without exposure to spiritual discipline; and that westerners must change their concept of "reality" by eliminating their emphasis upon "objective consciousness." Westerners' rational, scientific, and doctrinaire scheme sometimes seem endangered by an intense awareness that characterizes eastern spitituality. However Needleman explains the essential distinction between theological speculation and spiritual experience and emphasizes that generally accepted Judaeo-Christian doctrine might bear little or no resemblance to the mysticism within the center of western religious traditions that frequently exhibits a striking similarity with eastern spirituality.

Needleman's The New Religions indicates how these emerging movements secure significance and exert persuasion through fascinating teachers arriving from the East, bringing their practical teachings and techniques, and developing their innovative institutions. These teachers instruct their pupils to appreciate intuition; and their teachings emphasize a particular technique, suggest a suspicion of the isolated intellect, and resist conceptual formulation. Among these "new" religious movements, according to Needleman, are Zen Buddhism, Meher Baba's followers, Subud, Krishnamurti's students, Transcendental Meditation, yoga practitioners, Sufism, Tibetan Buddhism, Vedanta, and humanistic mysticism.

Jacob Needleman and George Baker edited an outstanding anthology containing several illuminating studies, Understanding The New Religions (New York: Seabury, 1981). Scholars pursuing psychological, communicative, anthropological, economic, historical, political, and sociological research contend that these "new" religions are enormously significant for westerners and conclude that innovative methodologies must be created for studying these communities. Some scholars state that methods for examining static religion are inadequate for studying "new" religious movements that exhibit a dynamic, protean character. Innovative methodologies contradict the Enlightenment assumption that symbols, beliefs, and ceremonies can be comprehended by breaking these constructs into smaller fragments, permitting their essence to be critically analyzed. Theodore Roszak, whose superb Unfinished Animal (New York: Harper and Row, 1975) introduces these "new" religions, contributes to the anthology by criticizing studying religion "like some quaint fossil whose structure and uncertain function are now at last to receive expert analysis" from "specialists who can dissect their subject matter from every imaginable angle." Some writers wonder whether new studies examining "new" religion might become a new religion. However Roszak contends convincingly that intelligent inquirers should resist the "advent of a permanent secular dominance, one that closes itself once and for all to our transcendent longings," permitting these sentiments to survive only as subcultral debris obstructing a complete modernization.

"New" age adherents venturing toward emerging spiritual frontiers will enjoy Robert S. Ellwood's excellent anthology containing outstanding primary sources selected from Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and theosophy, Eastern Spirituality in America (New York: Paulist, 1987). Among the substantial studies is editors

Charles Y. Glock and Robert N. Bellah's The New Religious Consciousness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). These contributors consider "new" religious movements in the eastern and western traditions, quasi religious movements, and responses from the ecclesiastical establishment. Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone edited another valuable anthology, Religious Movements in Contemporary America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974). This book is especially helpful in discussing altered states of consciousness and processes of religious innovation.

Epilogue

"New age" beliefs grow from historic roots springing from a distinct literary tradition and impressive writings, yet these beliefs are ever alive. Hospitable toward an ancient wisdom and welcoming fresh knowledge, "new age" adherents recognize a brilliant worldview aglow among the ash of these times. As a periodic current rising repeatedly and disclosing expansive continents, the "new age" movement emerges amid amazement and astonishment - the wonder with which a playful child or dying adult perceives a profound beauty pervading the world. Fresh insights into "new age" phenomena appear in sophisticated magazines. Exploring spiritual and religious experience from the expansive perspective provided by historical traditions, Quest (Box 270, Wheaton, Illinois 60189) addresses readers with an intellectual and spiritual honesty and appeals to sincere seekers whose intellect and imagination transcends the traditional boundaries with an openness that invites diversity and requires no conformity. Parabola (656 Broadway, New York, New York 10012) publishes the writings from fine thinkers and writers, whose personal convictions and intellectual integrity win for Parabola a rightful reputation as a pioneering quarterly emploring cultur's mythic underpinnings.